

Print Consolidation – The Hidden ROI

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Technology's One Constant: Printing

In the always evolving world of information technology, a constant is always difficult to find. But one factor will likely always remain constant: the need for a decent printer.

Remember when everyone thought computers would eliminate the need for paper? It didn't happen. Most people would rather read from paper rather than strain their eyes reading text on a computer screen. People also enjoy the visceral touch and tangible feel of paper documents. Additionally, there will always be a need for certain types of documents: contracts, legal documentation, presentations, receipts and more.

Because paper is here to stay, it makes sense for companies to maximize their ROI on printing, increase productivity, improve efficiency and reduce costs.

What is Print Consolidation?

Print consolidation entails assessing cost-saving opportunities within a company's printing, copying, fax and scanning environment. To start this process, a series of assessments are performed on an organization's printing, copying, fax and scanning devices, to first identify existing costs and project future costs. Launching this process provides insight into the nature of those expenditures and areas for improvement.



Next step: Gathering of all physical, application, fleet output and financial information associated with the enterprise-wide organization's printing, copying, fax and scanning devices. According to research from Gartner, *"The total cost of ownership (TCO) of printing is more than just hardware and consumables. Costs included in printing TCO are hardware, software, consumables, network management, infrastructure, end-use operations, maintenance and support. By trimming your printer, copier and fax fleet, purchasing competitively, and managing the fleet over time, you can reduce your output spending by up to 30 percent."* Once the team analyzes these costs, a series of solutions can be developed to identify areas where cost savings can be attained.

What Are the Tools?

Vendors and manufacturers have developed software to help companies manage their printing environments more efficiently and with new cost savings. HP's Webjetadmin software and Lexmark's MarkVision Pro application are examples from two of the larger vendors, while additional management tools also are available from smaller vendors such as FM Audit, Print Audit 5 and Print Fleet. These tools provide information on how many pages are

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printed from each device, as well as to what kind of device is being used. Depending upon which tool is used, additional information and administration options are available. This sort of data helps identify areas with heavy print usage, insight that may lead to better management of resources or an entirely different solution.

Do You Have a Legacy Printer?

In the back of every office, it seems, there is a printer or copier that is more than five years old. You can usually find it by the loud, frustrated people or technician huddled around, trying to fix it. Gartner reports that “50% of printer fleets are 5 years old.” How many times have you been at the printer when the print cartridge ran out, or you were on a tight timeline to get your presentation done, and it wouldn’t print at all?

The costs associated with maintaining legacy printers and copiers are disproportionately high and getting higher every day. Legacy printers are slower, use more supplies and have a high rate of malfunction.

Upgrading these devices to newer technology can help employees be more productive with their time, as well as reduce overall printing expenses driven upward by increased maintenance of outdated, inefficient technology.

Technology Overhaul

One newer technology that has drawn the attention of many companies is multifunction printing devices. Multifunction printing devices are able to print (in color), copy, fax and scan a document — and send it to an individual’s e-mail account. These devices are now field-proven and more affordable than ever for businesses to purchase.

Improving Employee Productivity

In an ideal corporate environment, each employee would have a personal MFP device at the desk to maximize productivity. This, however, is not a practical or cost-efficient option. Instead, companies can tactically insert or reposition a printer or MFP device among a cluster of employees based on requirements such as distance to printers, size of jobs, speed of output, job functions and the number of print outputs anticipated. Whether it is setting up a printing pool for high-output areas or inserting a color MFP to replace the old copier, the solution can produce a sizeable return on investment for an organization. It’s a way of doing more with less.

Gartner estimates that worldwide, businesses spend \$130 billion on office document printing and copying each year. Of that amount, 70 percent is related to operating costs such as supplies, break/fix servicing, and management and employee interventions of the 50 million copiers, printers and fax machines in use around the world.

Optimizing Supply Management

In the old days, end users would call the help desk when printing or copier supplies were exhausted. Hours later, perhaps, a technician or administrator would replace the supplies. Now, however, printers are proactive. Some printer fleet software is able to proactively inform a designated employee when the toner or ink is low, automatically order supplies and have the cartridge replaced or paper jam resolved before a call to the help desk call is even made.

“Gartner also advises organizations to consolidate purchasing into a single department with a person assigned to be the output “czar” with continual ownership of companywide output cost (see “Appoint a ‘Czar’ to Control Your Output Fleet,” HARD-WW-DP-0576).” Doing so will reduce the number of printer calls to the help desk and minimize printer downtime.

Uncovering the Hidden ROI in Print Consolidation

Has your company pushed the old copier aside and, in doing so, found hidden return on investment (ROI) opportunities? Has it analyzed employee productivity as it relates to printing? If not, have an assessment performed and start saving. The longer you wait, the more expenses you incur.

Learn more about SARCOM’s services for print consolidation by contacting SARCOM via e-mail at inquiry@sarcom.com.